



**Rockford Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization**
City of Rockford, Public Works Department
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

POLICY COMMITTEE

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Transportation, Region 2

**RATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 19, 2006**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chad Atkinson, Village of Machesney Park Planning; Steve Ernst, City of Rockford Public Works Department; Patrick Zuroske, City of Rockford Public Works Department; Aaron Rucker, City of Rockford Community Development Program; Craig Lawler, City of Belvidere Public Works Department; Mark Painter, Village of Winnebago; Jim Johnson, RMTD; Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway Department; Adam Tegen, Belvidere – Boone County Planning Department; Sue Mroz, Winnebago County Planning and Development; Dan Jacobson, City of Loves Park Public Works; Nathan Bruck, City of Loves Park Community Development; David Noel, Village of Roscoe Economic Development.

MEMBERS MISSING: Greater Rockford Airport Authority, IDOT-District 2.

OTHERS PRESENT: Sharon Durbin, IDOT Springfield; Patrick Warkins, IDOT; Jay Howell, IDOT; Shawn Goetz, Hanson Engineers; Frank Nauman, Hanson Engineers; Arianne Clarke, City of Rockford; Sherri Van der Wege, Baxter & Woodman; Bunny Anderson, Illinois Tollway Authority; Carlos Molina, First Rockford Group; Jannyce Fadden, Rockford Area Economic Development Council; Dave Taylor, Northern Illinois Commuter Rail Initiative; Rick Mohaupt, Winnebago County Highway Department; Gary McIntyre and Hayes Morrison, City of Rockford and RATS staff.

Meeting was called to order by Mr. Steve Ernst of City of Rockford Public Works Department at 10:08 am with a quorum present.

1. Approval of Minutes of September 22, 2005 & November 17, 2005 RATS Technical Committee Meetings:

There were no minutes to approve, however Mr. Gary McIntyre indicated minutes for November 17, 2005 were on the City's website. A discussion ensued over what documents were expected in the mail and which were only posted on the website. Printed copies of September and November minutes will be mailed.

2. Agency Reports: Individual project updates are listed on the TIP Status report. Items of special note are listed below.

Illinois Department of Transportation, District 2 – No update.

Winnebago County Highway Department – No update.

City of Rockford Public Works – Updates listed on the TIP Status report.

City of Loves Park Public Works – Updates listed on the TIP Status report. Mr. Dan Jacobson thanked Shawn Goetz from Hanson Professional Engineers for his assistance on Pearl Avenue bridge. Lyford Road limits should be Interstate to Orth Road. This project is being managed by Winnebago County. Orth Road project limits should be Interstate to Paulson Road. Riverside Boulevard limits should be I-90 tollway to Argyle Road. This project is also being managed by Winnebago County. Mr. Jacobson will coordinate with Winnebago County to decide who will be updating progress reports to RATS for Lyford Road and Riverside Boulevard.

Village of Machesney Park – Updates listed on the TIP Status report.

City of Rockford Community Development – No update.

Rockford Mass Transit District – Getting the bidding process started for the paratransit storage facility which will be built ½ block west of current building on north side of Mulberry.

City of Loves Park Community Development – No update.

Winnebago County Planning and Economic Development – In the process of hiring a long-range planner. Grants are in the works to secure the funding for the planner. The long-range plan will begin within the next month to month-and-a-half.

Belvidere – Boone County Regional Planning – The final draft of the text and maps for Tollway Neighborhood Plan is ready for viewing. Digital versions are available by contacting Mr. Adam Tegen. It is planned to have the plan adopted by both the City of Belvidere and Boone County within the next month or so NICRI can continue meeting with the Tollway.

Boone County Highway – Updates listed on the TIP Status report.

City of Belvidere Public Works – Updates listed on the TIP Status report.

Village of Roscoe – Updates listed on the TIP Status report.

Village of Winnebago – Elias Street improvement project from Cunningham to just south of US 20 is 99% complete with only landscaping and punch items remaining.

Illinois State Toll Highway Authority – Plaza 1 is on schedule to be completed by the end of August 2006. When I-90 is widened in 2008/2009, a third tolling lane will be added. McCurry Road bridge abutments are being constructed and construction of the noise wall has started on the East side of I-90. The Belvidere plaza will have two westbound open road tolling lanes which will be complete at the end of August. The Marengo plaza will have two eastbound open road tolling lanes open by the end of August. A fact sheet is available.

IDOT Division of Urban Program Planning – No update.

2.25 Amendment to the Agenda presented by Mr. Steve Ernst: Rockford Area Economic Development Council (EDC)

Pertaining to item number eight on the agenda, Expansion of the RATS Technical Committee, Mr. Steve Ernst introduced Janyce Fadden, President of the EDC, who has requested an opportunity to speak to the technical committee. Ms. Janyce Fadden remarked the EDC is vitally interested in RATS work. EDC will be completing a study within the next month which is designed to help EDC understand the best way for this area to compete with other regions and what the area needs to do to improve ourselves as a product. This information will allow EDC to focus its marketing efforts. A proposal has been made to Association of Industrial Realtors of Chicago (AIRES) to hold their annual bus tour along I-90 and I-39. Usually 150 people attend this bus tour in September or October. Cord Construction is helping EDC coordinate this effort.

3. NICRI Commuter Rail Alternative Analysis (AA) Funds: Amendment to the RATS FY-2006 Transportation Improvement Program – RATS Resolution 2006-1

Ms. Hayes Morrison indicated the resolution 2006-1 and addendum that was disseminated at the start of the meeting. She continued by reporting the 5339 funds were for \$1 million in FY2006 and \$1 Million in 2007. Ms. Morrison did not include the \$1 million in the 2007 addendum to the TIP in case there was a change in funding. Table 8 of the addendum shows \$250,000 as a local match.

In Table 7, 5307 funds have been amended to read approximately \$2.3 million. This resolution will be presented to the Policy Committee on Thursday, January 19, 2006. This resolution will allow us to start drawing upon these funds. The first item drawn will be the request for proposal for an alternatives analysis for NICRI will go out in the next month or two. Mr. Steve Ernst made a motion to approve resolution 2006-1. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

4. RATS Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STU) Funds: RATS Resolution 2006-2

Mr. Steven Ernst related events of the November Technical Committee meeting where he presented findings regarding the history of transportation funding. During this research Mr. Ernst came across some interesting funding ideas from other states in the Midwest surrounding Illinois are using. The last time this body took action to concur in a formula for the way STP-urban funds are split up between urban areas and the State of Illinois was 1992 as part of ICE-T. Resolution 2006-2 This resolution rescinds resolution 92-4 and encourages other Illinois MPO's to work with IDOT to come up with a new funding formula for the funds to come out of SAFETEA – LU For the start of the State's fiscal year in July 2006. This was an item requested by Winnebago County and Loves Park.

Randy Blankenhorn and Sharon Durbin of IDOT central office are very supportive of getting all MPO's together to discuss this issue and overall funding. RATS was able to hold a meeting with CATS to look at their funding history and area needs. Mr. Blankenhorn would very much like to have a new funding formula resolved. Mr. Steve Ernst made a motion to approve resolution 2006-2. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

5. IL 173 Corridor Plan:

Mr. Gary McIntyre received a letter from IDOT requesting further discussion from the Technical Committee regarding access points primarily along 173 between IL-251 and Burden Road. After a brief discussion it was decided IDOT needed to meet with Loves Park, Machesney Park and Winnebago County soon to discuss what access would be preferred. Mr. Steven Ernst mentioned that if IDOT required Policy Committee action there may not be a February Policy Committee meeting. If IDOT is looking for a reaffirmation with a change, the Technical Committee could run that through and approve it through Policy Committee meeting either in February or March. Mr. Ernst made a motion approve the letter from Ross Monk and the changes detailed in that letter. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

6. RATS Environmental Justice & Title VI Report:

Ms. Hayes Morrison presented an updated copy of a September 2003 Environmental Justice & Title VI consideration document that was presented to the technical committee as a draft but a final was never approved. RATS has updated this document and presented it for approval. The draft will be available on the City's website by the end of the month for review and a vote will be taken in February for a Technical Committee recommendation to have the Policy Committee adopt the document. Mr. Steve Ernst suggested RMTD and Boone County Council on Aging take a careful look at this report.

7. RATS FY-2007 Unified Work Program (UWP):

Mr. Gary McIntyre presented a chart summarizing the funding amounts. He mentioned three grant applications sent to Springfield; Boone County submitted a grant for Popular Grove Road, Winnebago County submitted an application for a planner, and City of Rockford submitted one for ITS deployment. Mr. Steve Ernst asked Ms. Sharon Durbin if there was any news on these grants, however Ms. Durbin did not have an update.

The budget is currently \$25,000 over for next year. Mr. McIntyre stated that until we get our funding marks, we will not know whether we need additional SPR funds from Springfield. A draft of the UWP needs to be given to Springfield in March with a final adoption of the 2007 UWP by May. A draft will be ready for the February or March Technical Committee meeting.

Mr. McIntyre pointed out the priorities of using these monies considered by RATS:

- 1) Essential programs that RATS performs through Gary McIntyre and Hayes Morrison
- 2) Every four years RATS is reviewed by the Federal Highway Transit Administration, which presents several recommendations for RATS to improve, such as a RATS website.
- 3) Special corridor studies requested by member agencies, such as Springfield Avenue southwest side of Rockford.
- 4) Land use planning staff takes lowest priority. Mr. McIntyre pointed out RATS has never funded additional planning staff outside of RATS staff planners.

Keeping these priorities in mind, Mr. McIntyre asked if anyone had other requests that would require requesting additional money from IDOT. Mr. McIntyre indicated they would send this in by the end of February.

Next, Mr. McIntyre presented the scope of work for the Bicycle Pedestrian Study recommended in Long Range Plan which was accepted in the 2006 UWP. This study involves almost every agency and has three parts. The first is to look at the existing highway/street network system and come up with a recommended system for on-street bicycle lanes or bicycle routes, along with off-street shared use path facilities. This study looks at the on-street facilities we currently have and try to determine what we can have on the street if we connect the off-street paths.

The next phase looks at the current land use/subdivision ordinances and how to make those ordinances more bicycle user friendly from a development standpoint, which includes site plan review.

The final phase looks at integration with the busses and bicycle program. RMTD is strongly encouraging this merging. This final phase is a long-term phase. This may include critical stops for the bicycles, and bike racks on the front of the busses.

One of the aspects to this scope is for a consultant to devise a list of items that can be implemented quickly, within a one to four-year time frame, specifically on-street bicycle routes. Mr. McIntyre indicated the schedule dates listed in the RFP and suggested holding the pre-proposal meeting in Loves Park. Questions and comments should be directed to Mr. McIntyre.

8. Expansion of RATS Technical Committee:

Ms. Hayes Morrison presented a draft list to the Technical Committee in November for possible agencies RATS would like to extend an invitation to participate in Technical Committee meetings. Mr. Steve Ernst indicated he received no further comments, changes, or additions to the list and therefore plans on sending a letter of invitation to these agencies. Items that may affect a particular agency will receive a direct invitation in the future if the agency declines to actively participate.

9. Progress Reports On:

9.1 Winnebago County Smart Growth

No report.

9.2 Springfield Corridor Planning Study

No report, however Mr. Gary McIntyre mentioned there are additional funds which need to be spent by June of this year.

9.3 NICRI Commuter Rail Alternative Analysis

Ms. Hayes Morrison presented a draft request for qualifications in conjunction with Mr. Jim Ryan, City Administrator for the City of Rockford for the alternative analysis for NICRI. This is the second step required by the FTA's New Starts Planning and Project Development Process and needs to be very detailed. The draft was presented to everyone on the NICRI mailing list and comments have already started to come in. Ms. Morrison stated the goal is to have a consultant begin working on the analysis by May 1, 2006. The RFQ will be finalized by NICRI on Wednesday, January 25, 2006, and added to the next TIP. Mr. Dave Taylor indicated the consultants are free to look at all alternative routes, with no reference to any specific route given by members of NICRI, as required by FTA. At the end of this process, RATS will need to select the local preferred alternative.

9.4 RMTD East Side Transfer Center

RMTD is waiting for input from Rockford Zoning Department regarding the acceptability to a site RMTD is looking at. Mr. Ernst asked Mr. Aaron Rucker to mention that to the Zoning Department.

9.5 IL-173 Corridor Planning Study

The document exhibits are complete and waiting to be assembled before introducing the draft to the Technical Committee for review

9.6 RATS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

Mr. Steve Ernst stated this plan is complete and printed with digital copies available and handed out at next month's meeting. Contact Ms. Hayes Morrison for a CD if you need one sooner. The final plan will shortly be on the RATS website, and Mr. Ernst suggested having IDOT host the plan on their website also. Mr. Ernst will be attending a dinner to receive an award for the plan presented by the A.C.E.C.

10. Communications

On December 1, 2005, RATS received a letter from the Illinois Commerce Commission regarding the Railroad Crossing Safety Improvement brochures with instructions on how to apply for funding for railroad crossing projects. Instructions are available if any agency is interested.

On December 8, 2005 RATS received notification from Engineer of Local Roads and Street regarding the Highway Safety Improvement program, formerly known as HES. Applications for safety improvement programs are due February 10, 2006. RATS has this document available for review.

11. Other Business

No other business.

At 11:32 P.M., with no further business to conduct, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.